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Grey power: towards a political economy of older voters in the UK

Abstract

The impact of age on voting behaviour and political outcomes has become an issue of increasing interest, particularly in the UK. Age divides in voter turnout and political preferences have led to claims that age is the ‘new class.’ In this article, we contrast existing ‘cultural backlash’ and political economy explanations of the age divide in politics, and challenge the view that older people are predominantly ‘left behind’, culturally or economically. We show that older people have distinct material interests, related to housing wealth and pensions’ income, that are visible in their political preferences. We argue for the development of a new political economy of age.

Keywords: Brexit, older voters, patrimonial voting, intergenerational inequality, pensions, housing.

Introduction

The impact of age on voting behaviour and political outcomes has become an issue of increasing interest, particularly in the UK. The 2017 general election saw an unprecedented demographic division in the electorate between old and young: exit polls and post-election surveys suggested that between 55% and 58% of over 65s voted for the Conservative Party, while between 57% and 62% of the under-35s voted for the Labour Party.¹ Similar age divisions marked voter preferences for Leave or Remain in the 2016 Brexit referendum: older voters delivered the narrow majority to ‘Leave’ the EU against the preference to ‘Remain’ of most younger voters.

Meanwhile, in many advanced capitalist economies, including the UK, age-related inequalities in wealth have been growing, while levels of welfare state support for retired people and the working-age population have diverged. In the UK, the basic state pension and allowances for older people have been protected in the era of austerity, whereas there have been significant cuts to the benefits for the working age population. These trends have led to interest in the power of the ‘grey vote’ and even claims of ‘gerontocracy’. Some commentators have speculated that age may become ‘the new class’ in British politics.²

In this article, we contrast the ‘cultural backlash’ or values-based explanation for older voters’ political preferences with political economy explanations of the age divide in politics that stress the inter-relationship of cultural and economic factors, and the importance – occupational and spatial – of the relationship of different groups of voters to the dynamic sectors and centres of the global knowledge economy.³ We challenge the view that, whether by reason of generational values or economic geography, older voters should be considered predominantly ‘left behind’. Instead, we provide evidence that older voters have increasingly distinct material interests that are visible in their political preferences. In particular, we examine the link between home ownership, age and voting, showing that, in line with theories of ‘patrimonial economic voting’, older homeowners have become a large and hitherto consistently Conservative voting bloc in UK general elections. Older voters also share welfare state preferences that are related to their position in the lifecycle, but social class differences emerge between home owning older voters and those living in rented

accommodation in their support for economic intervention and the value of the state pension. We show how both the differences between older voters, and their commonalities of interests and preferences, can contribute to our understanding of the age divides manifested in the Brexit referendum and 2017 general election votes. We conclude with some thoughts on the development of a political economy of older voters in the UK.

The rise of the ‘grey vote’

In common with other developed countries, the population of the UK is ageing as a result of increased life expectancy and the demographic bulge caused by the so-called ‘baby boomer’ generation. The ageing of the parliamentary electorate has also been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of older voters in the eligible voter population because of inward migration to the UK in recent decades from the EU and elsewhere of young people who are not entitled to vote in general elections.⁴ In a previous analysis of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) we found that in 2017, over 55s were 38% of the resident adult population but 39.9% of the electorate and over 65s, 23% and 24.5%, respectively.⁵

The growing relative weight of older people in the voting-age population is coupled with considerable inequalities in voter turnout by age. A large age difference in turnout first opened up in the early 1990s and it has persisted in recent general elections. Despite much speculation that Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party had benefited from a ‘youthquake’ at the 2017 general election, recent studies have suggested that there was no substantial change in turnout by age between the 2015 and 2017 general elections.⁶ Turnout at the 2017 general election among over 55s was 83.35%, compared to 58.15% of those under 55; and 84.34% vs. 63.06% for over and under 65s respectively. If we assume that both turnout and the proportion of those not entitled to vote due to their nationality remain constant, demographic change will mean that over 55s constitute over half of the voting public by 2020.⁷

Yet the power of older voters is only likely to be significant if their preferences and vote choices differ substantially from the rest of the electorate. Recent evidence suggests this is indeed the case. In both the Brexit referendum and the 2017 general election, there were very considerable differences in voting according to age. Using British Election Study (BES) data, Tables 1 and 2 show how each age group voted in the Brexit referendum and the 2017 general election respectively.

Table 1: EU referendum vote by age group (n=1695; non-voters excluded; self-reported vote weights)

EU referendum	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Total
Remain	59.1%	59.2%	46.2%	38.7%	49.7%
Leave	40.9%	40.8%	53.8%	61.3%	50.3%

Table 2: 2017 general election vote by age group (n=1616; non-voters excluded; self-reported vote weights)

2017 vote	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Total
Labour	60.0%	45.8%	40.3%	26.3%	41.0%
Conservatives	26.7%	35.7%	41.2%	62.1%	43.5%

Lib Dems	7.5%	10.5%	7.8%	5.4%	7.6%
Other	5.8%	8.1%	10.7%	6.3%	7.9%

The 2017 general election was the most polarised by age since at least 1970. To understand this sharpening of the age divide in the 2017 general election, we can focus on the BES Internet Panel data from 2014-2018. We treat each wave as a cross-section, containing a sample of more than 27,000 respondents and weighted by specific weights for each wave.

Figure 1 shows the probability of intending to vote Conservative by age group (indexed to February 2014) across the 14 waves collected in the panel. Individuals without a voting intention are excluded to make election waves and non-election waves more comparable. The data shows that between February 2014 (Wave 1) and the post-general election survey in May 2015 (Wave 6), there was a slight increase in polarisation by age group. All age groups became more likely to vote Conservative but the increase was largest among over 65s, followed by 50-64 year olds.

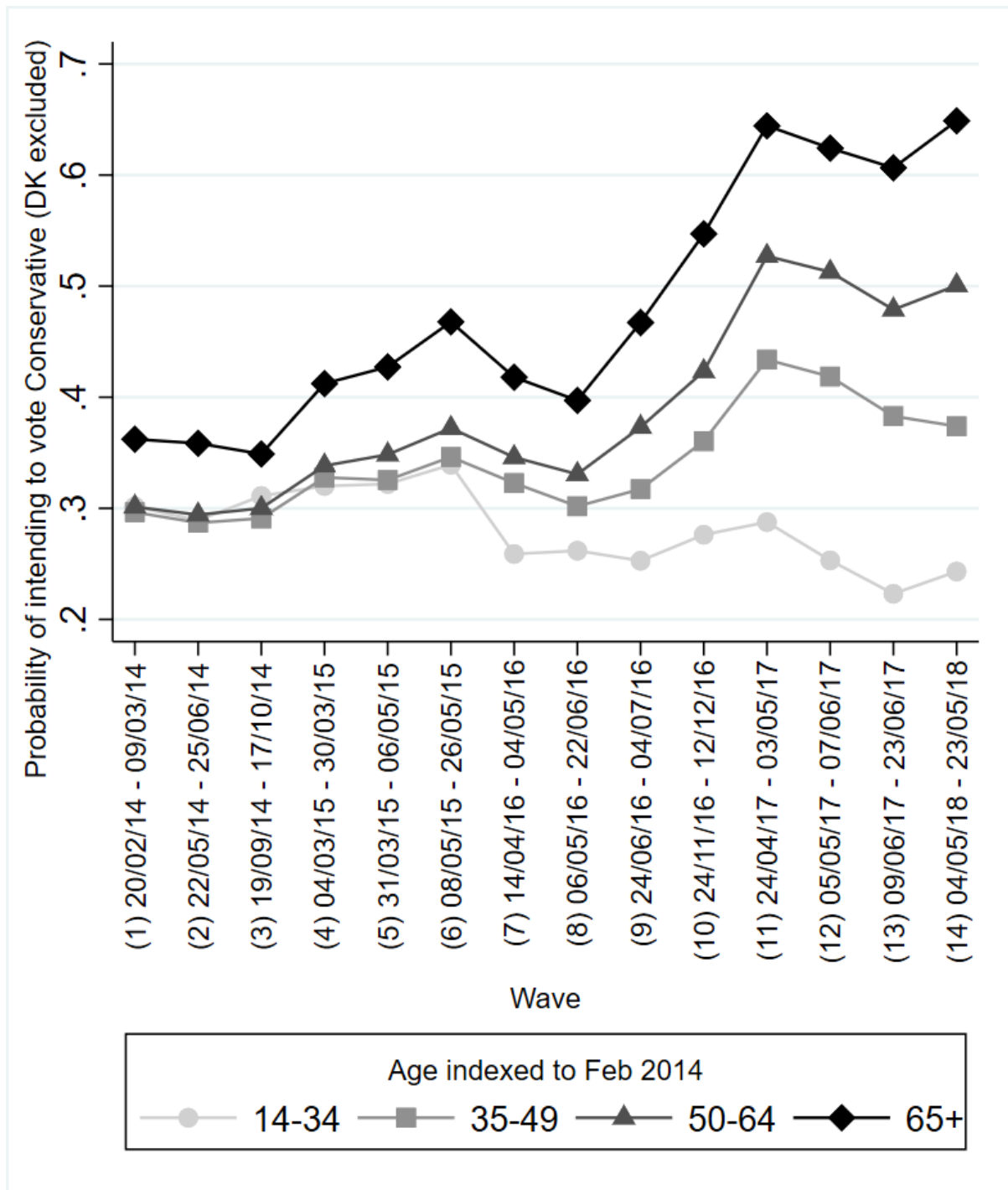


Figure 1: Probability of intending to vote Conservative (of those with a voting intention) by age indexed to February 2014 (Wave 1) until May 2018 (Wave 14). Source: BES Internet Panel Waves 1-14

The age divide in political preferences then sharpens considerably in Wave 9, precisely after the 23rd June 2016 Brexit referendum. The probability of voting Conservative rises for all groups but does so much more significantly for the 50-64s and the over 65s. There is then a shallow drop off in support for the Conservatives during the 2017 general election campaign, particularly for the youngest age group.

Explaining the age divide – ‘cultural backlash’?

While age has long been an important factor in British politics, the 2017 general election marked an unprecedented level of polarisation. There is an obvious hypothesis for this, which is that 2017 was a ‘Brexit election’ – an issue on which, as we have seen, voters are also deeply polarised by age.⁸ Support for the Conservative Party rose markedly amongst older Leave voters, assisted by the collapse of UKIP support, while Labour increased its vote share amongst working age Remain voters significantly more than it did amongst Leave voters.⁹

It is the importance of the Brexit vote that leads many to explain age differences in voting by reference to a “cultural backlash” – the title of an important recent work by Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris.¹⁰ The cultural backlash thesis maintains that recent ‘populist’ votes such as Brexit represent a conservative reaction against the ‘silent revolution’ in the cultural values of advanced societies like the UK towards social liberalism. Western societies have become more socially liberal on many issues and this has stimulated a backlash amongst voters holding authoritarian and conservative values. These values are strongest amongst older birth cohorts, particularly the interwar generation. In post-industrial areas characterised by low income and high unemployment, the authoritarian reflex against cultural change is accelerated by economic insecurity; material hardship sharpens the appeal of authoritarian-populist actors and anti-immigrant, anti-elite sentiments. But fundamentally, it is cultural values, not class or economics that explains the age differences in vote choice.

Indicators for both socially conservative cultural values and policy preferences do indeed show a strong correlation with voting for Brexit and the Conservative Party at the 2017 general election, reinforcing the argument that the values and vote choice are fundamentally related to each other.¹¹ However, these values and preferences can be due to ageing, period and cohort effects.¹² Older generations are indeed more Eurosceptic and/or authoritarian (cohort effect), whether because they grew up in a more conservative and a less globalised era outside of the European Union or because of compositional characteristics such as having lower levels of education, which is a consistent predictor of more authoritarian values. On the other hand, individuals also tend to get more Eurosceptic, conservative and authoritarian as they get older (ageing effect), and when it comes to vote choice, period or time effects - for example, prevailing macro-economic conditions - matter considerably to political outcomes. In one recent study of attitudes towards the EU since the early 1960s, by Eichengreen et al, period effects swamp both cohort and ageing effects.¹³ Grasso et al even find that once they account for the compositional characteristics of different cohorts as well as period and ageing effects, older generations are actually *less* authoritarian¹⁴. Thus, while the cultural values of older voters are clearly an important part of the story, identifying their root cause as a generational cultural backlash is at the very least contestable.

Economic geography, education and the knowledge economy

A more fundamental challenge to the ‘cultural backlash’ theory comes from accounts that place the political economy of the transition to the digitalised knowledge economy at the heart of the new ‘cultural’ divisions. In their latest work, Torben Iversen and David Soskice argue that advanced capitalism’s primary asset is specialised knowledge, which is embedded in the social networks of co-located, highly educated, and relatively immobile skill clusters¹⁵. The process of skill agglomeration in post-industrial economies means that urban centres that attract young, well-educated people expand and thrive, while towns and rural areas that are

disproportionately old and lower skilled are left behind. This leads to the emergence of distinct winners and losers, formed along geographical, age and educational cleavages: the winners are the young, educated workers in the urban knowledge economy, while the losers are older, lower skilled workers of the post-industrial towns and counties. Authoritarian cultural values of the older population derive from this economic reality, as do the liberal, cosmopolitan views of younger people: ‘postmaterialists’ and ‘populists’ are “rooted in different parts of the modern economy and it is impossible to detach their values from this underlying reality”.¹⁶

A similar approach is taken by Jennings & Stoker who relate economic decline in English and Welsh constituencies to a long-term shift towards voting Conservative. Places that have experienced relative decline have become more ‘closed’, while those that have enjoyed growth in the knowledge economy have become more liberal and ‘open’. The Conservatives have seen their vote share rise in the former; Labour in the latter.¹⁷

These accounts usefully reject unhelpful dichotomies between ‘culture’ and ‘economics’. But as they ground cultural values and political preferences in the material interests, occupations and economic geography produced by the transition from the industrial or Fordist economy to the knowledge economy, they tend to associate older voters with ‘left behind’ areas and/or industrial occupations. This is hard to reconcile with the substantial evidence of the *relative economic prosperity of older voters* in the UK: their historically high levels of housing and pension wealth, and the increase in their living standards in recent decades, particularly when compared to younger people in the period since the financial crisis in 2008.¹⁸ Large numbers of Conservative supporting older voters live in some of the most prosperous and wealthy parts of the UK, as indeed do substantial numbers of Leave voters. This will be disguised if ‘age’ is itself entered as a variable for the measurement of relative decline or the ‘left behind’ economy i.e. if older voters’ values and vote choices are taken to be shaped by their (geographical) economic position, which is itself in part determined by reference to the age of the workforce or local population.

We can tease some of these issues out by looking at the *independent* effect of age on voting once accounting for education and economic geography. As Figure 2 shows, in the EU referendum, graduates were more likely to vote Remain at all ages, although older people were slightly less divided by education. Given the considerable compositional differences in educational attainment across age groups – in the BES weighted sample, approximately 43% of 21-54 year olds had at least an undergraduate degree versus 28% of over 55s – this explains some, though not all, of the age effect in the Brexit referendum. However, while graduates were also less likely to vote Conservative at the 2017 general election, Figure 2 shows that this appears to be entirely driven by an age effect, as there is no statistically significant difference between graduates and non-graduates at a given age. Thus, regardless of whether higher education is perceived as an entry ticket to the knowledge economy or a process of socialisation that engenders libertarian values, it cannot fully account for the age divide in relation to Brexit, and explains very little in terms of the probability of voting Conservative.

Focusing directly on the economic geography of the knowledge economy, we can examine how an area’s integration into the global knowledge economy affects voting patterns. We identify high-skilled knowledge-intensive industries as the following sectors: Professional,

Scientific and Technical Activities, Financial and Insurance Activities and Information and Communication, following the work of Anne Wren.¹⁹ Thus, areas that have a high proportion of individuals employed in those sectors can be assumed to be well-integrated into the global knowledge economy. This measure is negatively correlated with the age of a constituency: younger areas are more likely to have more people employed in high-skilled knowledge-intensive industries. However, as with education and age at the individual-level, we want to separate out the independent effects of the age of a constituency and the extent to which it is integrated into the global knowledge economy.

Figure 3 shows that – once we account for the age of a constituency – areas with more high-skilled knowledge-intensive industries were more likely to vote Conservative in greater numbers. This relationship was strongest in older constituencies, with the very youngest constituencies equally unlikely to vote Conservative, regardless of their sectoral composition. This runs counter to the interpretation of support for the Conservatives at the 2017 general election coming from older voters in left-behind areas: older areas with a *high* proportion of individuals employed in knowledge-intensive industries were more likely to vote Conservative. However, the EU referendum tells a different story: areas with more high-skilled knowledge-intensive industries were less likely to vote Leave and this relationship was strongest in *younger* areas.²⁰ It is a similar picture if we look at the *swing* towards the Conservatives between 2015 and 2017. This lends support to the conclusion that Jennings and Stoker have reached that the 2017 general election was a ‘tilting’ of the political axis but not a realignment.²¹ Brexit led to an increase in support for the Conservatives in ‘left-behind’ areas but this was not enough to balance out existing divisions. Importantly though, the age of a constituency has a clear effect on voting patterns, independent of its integration into the globalised knowledge economy, particularly at the 2017 general election.

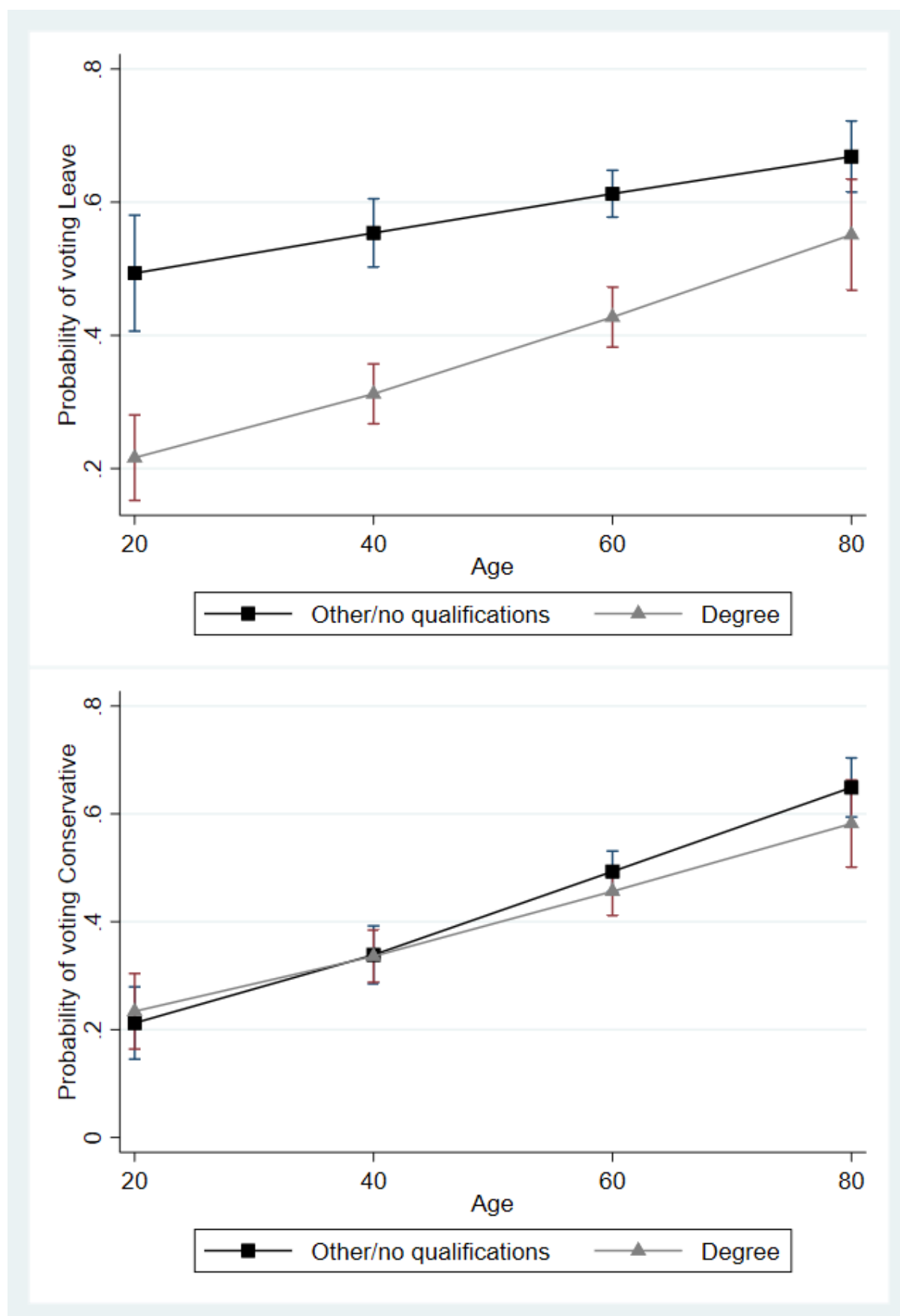


Figure 2: Probability of voting Leave in the 2016 EU referendum and voting Conservative in the 2017 general election by age and qualifications. Source: BES 2017 post-election survey

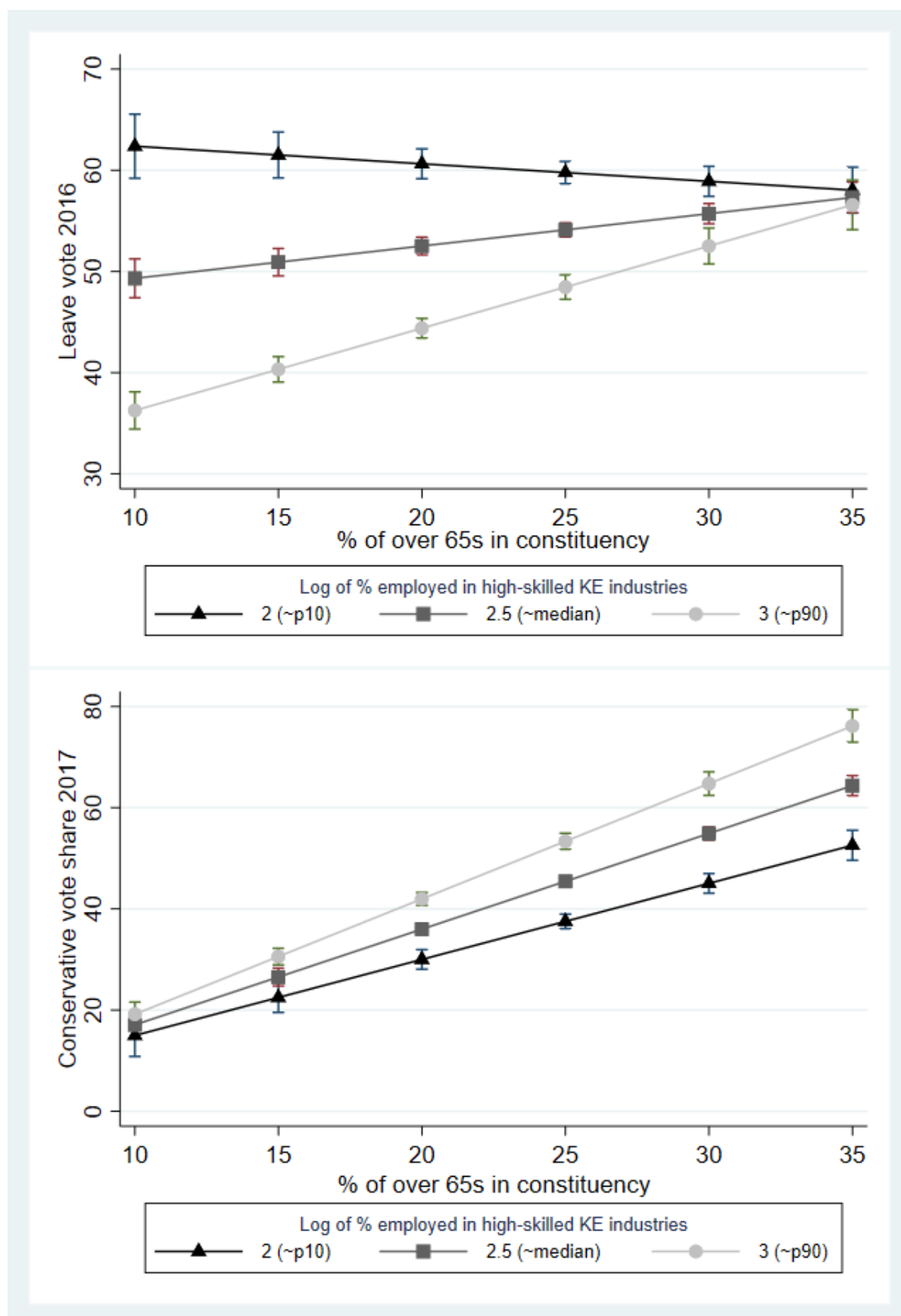


Figure 3: Predicted Conservative vote share 2017 and Leave vote share 2016 by the proportion of over 65s in a constituency and the log of the % of individuals employed in high-skilled knowledge-intensive sectors. Source: ONS

Housing, the welfare state and age

These results suggest that we need to develop a fuller political economy explanation of the age divides in the electorate and, in particular, the interests of older voters in their economic and social security. In the rest of this piece, we focus on two aspects of this question: housing wealth and pensions. Cohort effects in the accumulation of housing wealth have led to very high rates of home ownership – above 75% - amongst the current generation of over ‘65s. In economic policy preferences, consistent with ‘patrimonial’ voting theory, this may predispose older people to vote for parties that they perceive will protect the value of housing assets in the economy, or conversely leave untaxed their housing wealth. We might then expect to see social class differences emerge in the preferences of older voters depending on whether they rent or own their own properties.

Second, older voters have shared interests in the protection of their welfare state entitlements – that is, to maintaining the real terms value of the Basic State Pension and older people’s allowances, as well as protecting spending on the public services upon which they rely disproportionately, such as the National Health Service. This is indeed what has happened to public spending in the period of austerity since 2010. Again, some social class differences might be expected to emerge here, given the relative dependence of low-income pensioners on state provision, but we might expect older voters to have shared welfare preferences that distinguish them from younger and middle aged voters.

Housing & Home Ownership

In their recent *Political Quarterly* article on the relationship between house prices, housing markets and vote choice, Ansell and Adler find a strong correlation between home ownership, age and voting Conservative at the 2017 general election: ‘whereas among renters (in private and social housing) age is essentially unrelated to vote choice, among homeowners there is a striking difference of around 30 per cent as we move from people in their twenties to people in their eighties’.²² The authors explain the fact that age increases the likelihood of voting Conservative for homeowners by pointing to the varying levels of equity that individuals will have at different points in their life. Older people are more likely to own a large share of their property or own it outright. They have more housing wealth than young people and less risk of negative equity.

Using the BES post-election cross-sectional surveys from 1970, we explore the interaction between housing tenure and age for all the general elections in this period, and find that the picture has been relatively similar since 1979: older renters tend not to vote Conservative much more than younger renters, while older homeowners are a clearly more dependable constituency vis-à-vis younger homeowners.

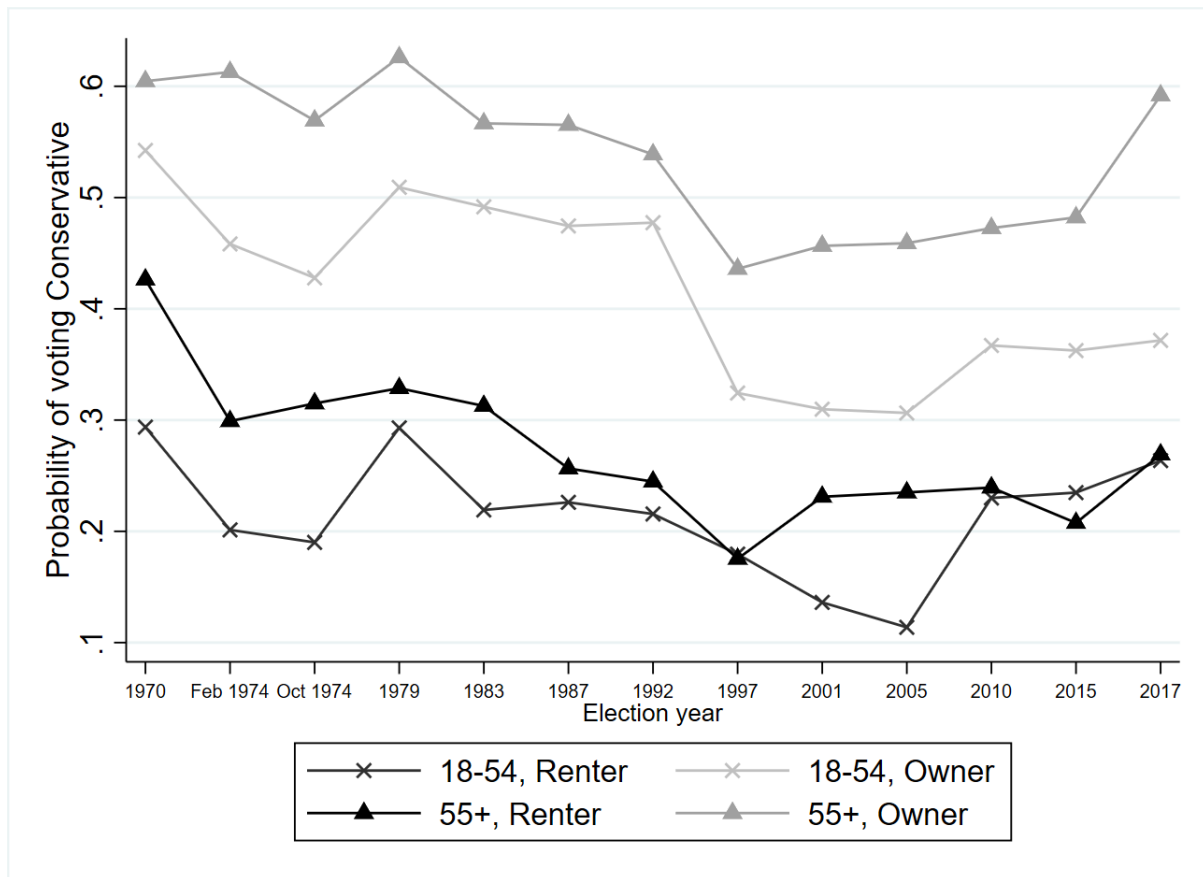


Figure 4: Probability of voting Conservative by age group (18-54; 55+) and housing tenure (owner; renter) 1970-2017

However, although this pattern may be relatively consistent since the 1970s, the relative size of homeowners and renters in different age cohorts has changed considerably. Using data analysed by the Resolution Foundation from the Family Expenditure Survey prior to 1984, and Labour Force Survey for subsequent years, Figure 5 shows homeownership rates for different age groups between 1961 and 2017. The proportion of over 65s who are homeowners has increased continually since 1970 and it now stands at over 75%.

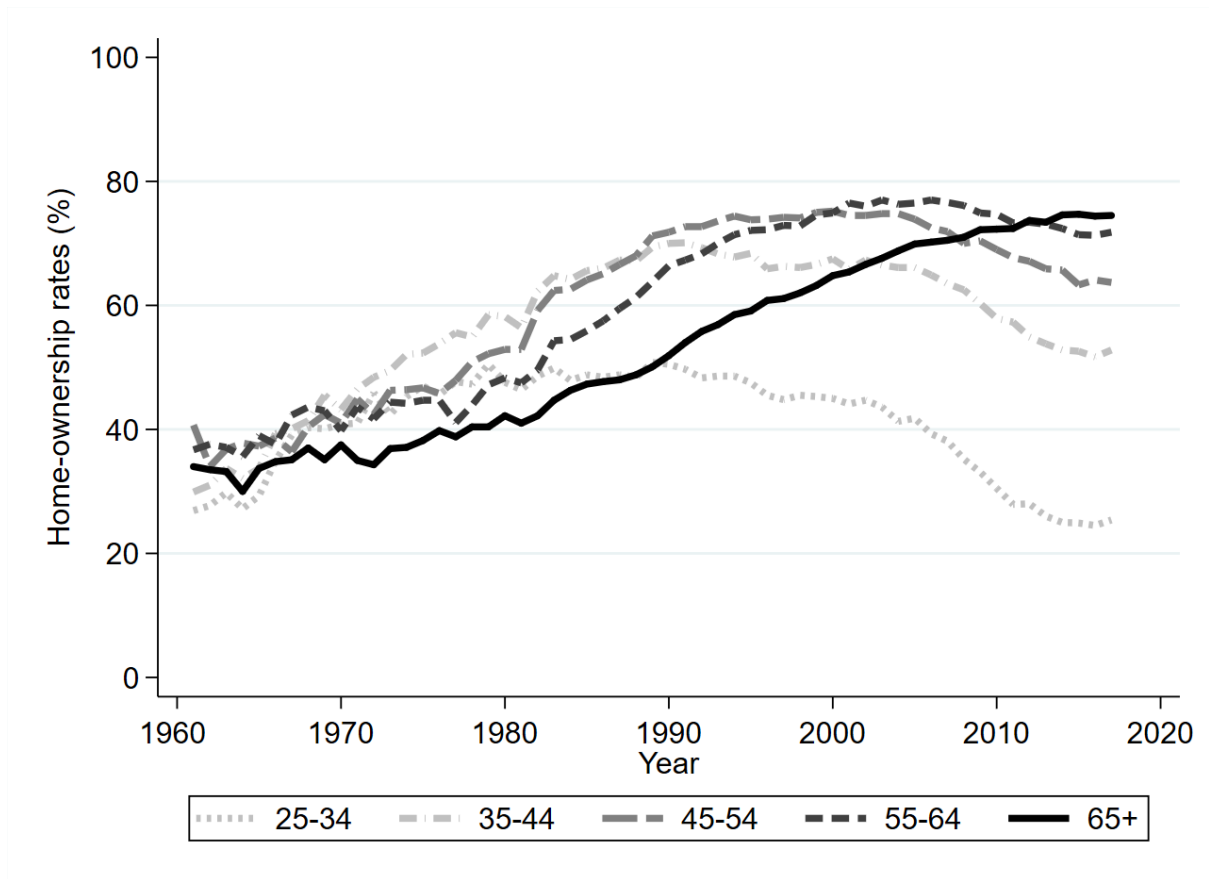


Figure 5: Home-ownership rates by age group of household. Source: Resolution Foundation, FES 1961-1983, LFS 1984-2017

This is largely driven by generational differences: baby boomers were able to get on the housing ladder and buy housing cheaply in their youth, amassing housing wealth during the long asset boom that started in the 1970s.

The importance of housing wealth to the older vote also runs counter to the argument of a spatial divide between left-behind and prosperous areas. As with individual-level data, there is an interaction between the rates of home-ownership in a constituency and the age of the constituency in predicting voting patterns. Figure 6 shows that a higher median age of a constituency has a greater effect on the predicted Conservative vote share at the 2017 election in constituencies that also have high rates of home-ownership. Thus, older constituencies with lower rates of home-ownership are not as likely to vote Conservative.

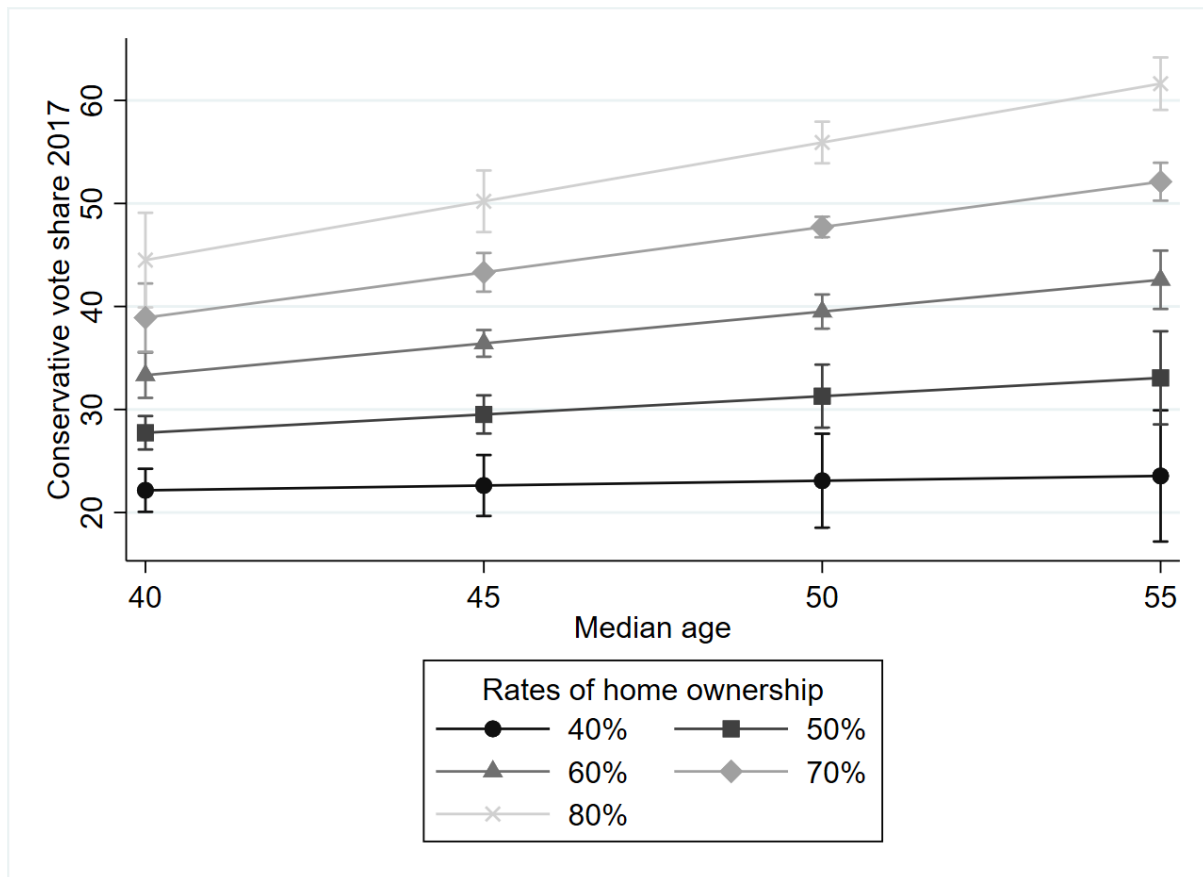


Figure 6: Predicted Conservative vote share at 2017 general election by median age of constituency and rates of home ownership. Source: ONS

Finally, Figure 7 shows the effect of age and housing tenure on two different dimensions of politics – the authoritarian-libertarian axis and the interventionist-market axis– using data from the BES post-election survey in 2017. It shows that regardless of housing tenure, age increases the extent to which individuals express authoritarian preferences. However, it also shows that age only reduces support for economic interventionism for homeowners.

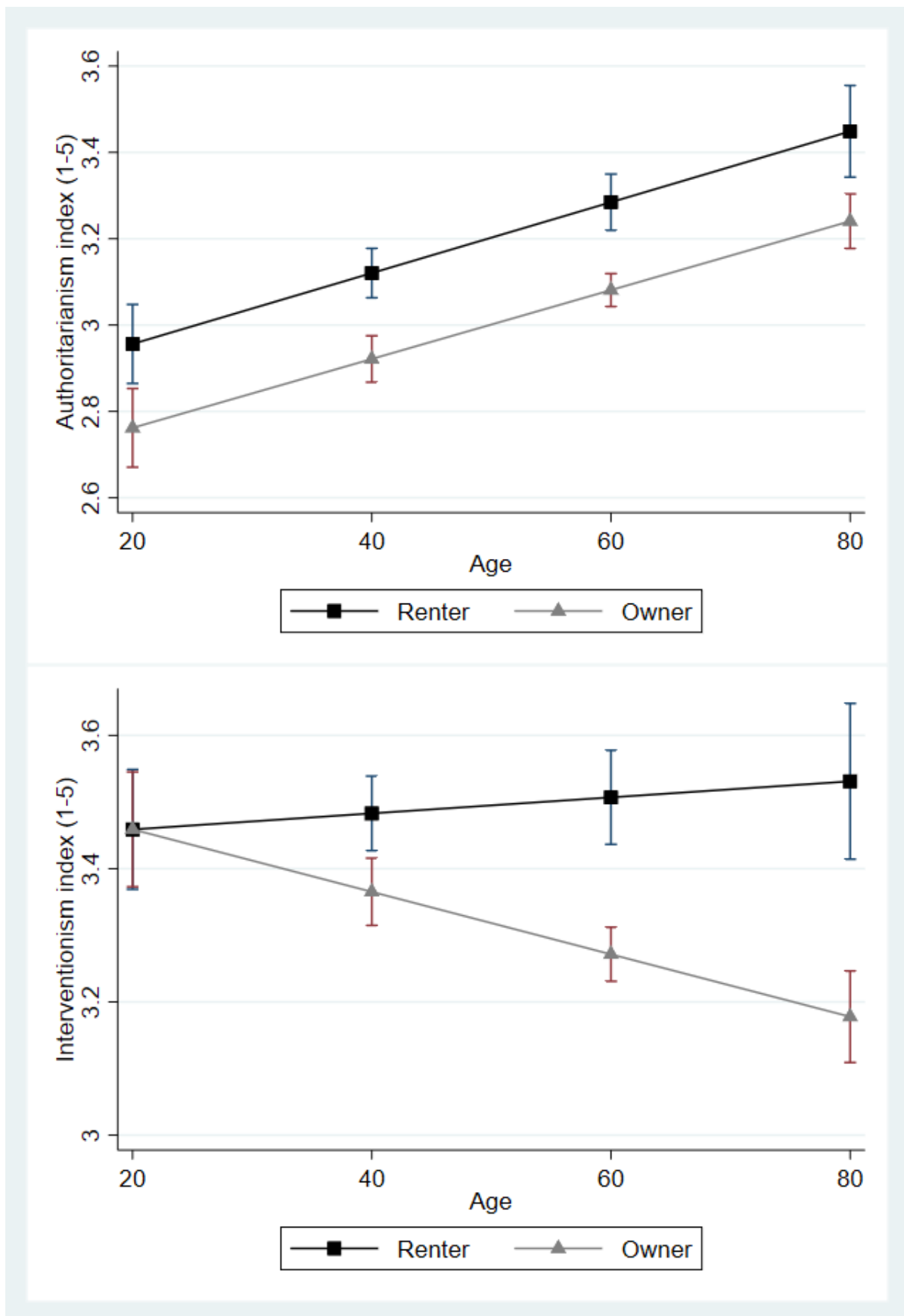


Figure 7: Predicted values on authoritarianism and interventionism index by age and housing tenure. Source: BES post-election survey 2017

The Welfare State

Another interpretation of the independent effect of age is that position in the *life cycle* shapes the priorities an individual gives to different elements of the welfare state. The old will prefer a greater emphasis on healthcare and pensions spending and the young will prefer education and childcare spending due to their immediate respective needs. In conditions of austerity, when services and social security benefits are being cut, voters may be forced to choose between these welfare preferences.

Cross-sectional analysis shows that there are indeed differences in preferences across age groups that fit the life-cycle hypothesis.²³ However, observed differences in preferences by age based on cross-sectional studies can result from both cohort and lifecycle effects. Across 21 years and 22 countries, Sørensen finds that life-cycle effects are relatively modest as older generations value pensions more and education less than younger generations, which accounts for a large proportion of the observed differences in age groups.²⁴

However, in the UK, we find mixed results for the idea that austerity opened up a new inter-generational conflict in attitudes to the welfare state. Using repeated cross-sections from British Social Attitudes data between 1999-2015, we examine support for more spending on retired people across different age groups (Figure 8). Contrary to our expectation that the politics of crisis and austerity would widen the age divide, the differences between younger people (18-34 year olds) and other age groups that existed between 1999 and 2008 shrunk after the financial crisis, and then disappeared as middle-aged and older people reduced their support for more spending on retired people by a considerable amount. This may be due to ‘thermostat’ dynamics, as increased government support for pensioners reduces the demand for more spending. Yet there is no clear reason why a proportionately greater reduction in demand would be seen among those with lifecycle interests in sustaining spending on retired people.

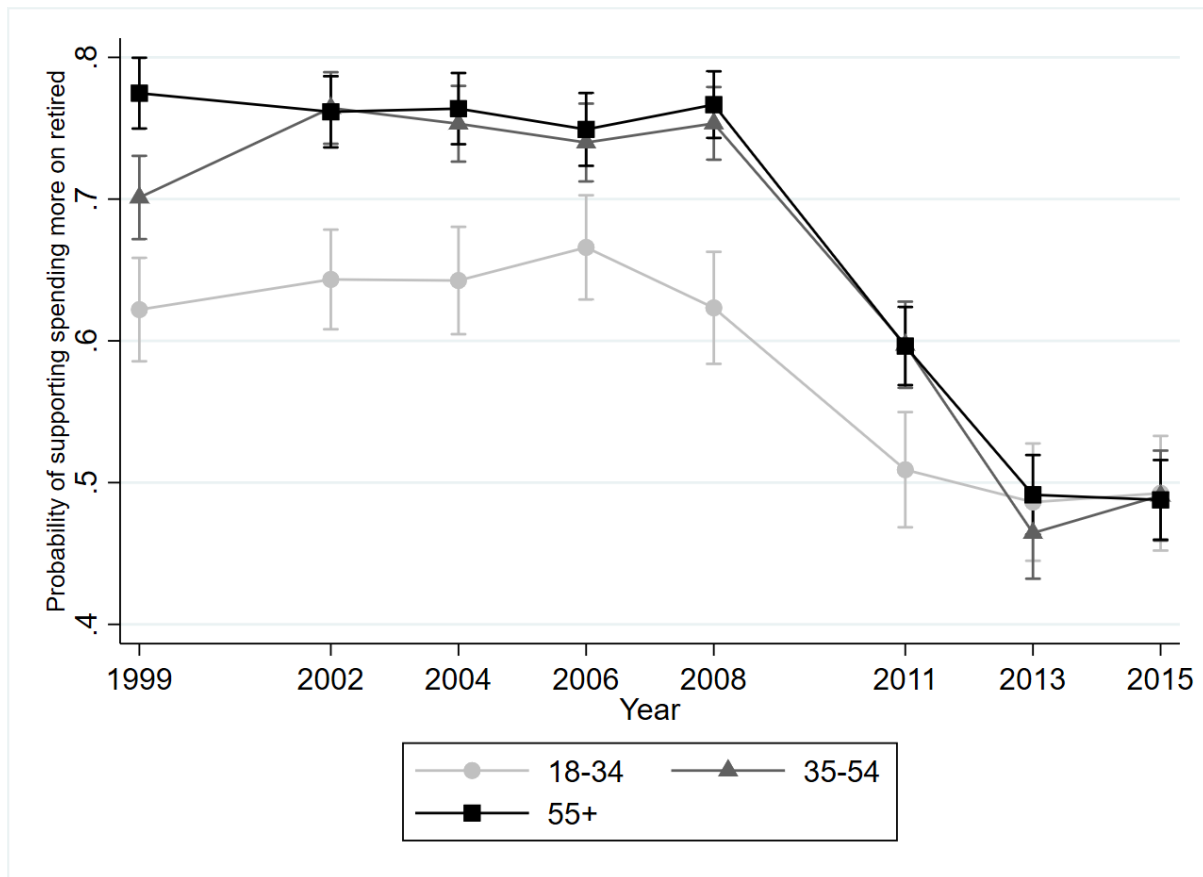


Figure 8: Probability of being in favour of spending more on retired people by age group between 1999 and 2015. Source: British Social Attitudes

However, studies show that when individuals are forced to prioritise among different spending items, a greater age divide appears, with older people more inclined to shift resources to pensions, while younger people want more resources for unemployment benefits.²⁵ The BES Internet Panel Wave 13, conducted after the 2017 general election, includes a question tailored to explore such trade-offs and intended to relate to the ‘Triple Lock’ policy of the Coalition and Conservative governments, which guarantees that the Basic State Pension increases at the rate of inflation, the average rise in wages or 2.5%, whichever is highest. Table 3 shows the responses by age group to the idea that pensions should increase even if average wages and prices are not going up. There are very clear age differences in the responses, with the highest levels of support amongst the over 65s.

Table 3: Responses to 'Triple Lock' question by age group. Source: BES Internet Panel Wave 13

Pensions should increase even if average wages and prices aren't going up	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	All
Strongly disagree	5.8%	4.6%	2.2%	1.0%	3.5%
Disagree	23.0%	21.8%	19.9%	16.1%	20.4%
Neither	23.1%	25.8%	25.5%	27.2%	25.3%
Agree	23.2%	27.4%	31.1%	33.8%	28.6%
Strongly agree	6.2%	10.7%	17.9%	20.1%	13.3%
Don't Know	18.8%	9.8%	3.6%	1.8%	8.9%

Figure 9 shows that, while there is greater support for the triple lock policy among older people in general, it is particularly pronounced among older renters. As with the differences between homeowners and renters in vote choice, this suggests that there are important social class differences amongst older voters in their welfare state preferences.



Figure 9: Predicted level of support (1-5) for the 'Triple Lock' policy by age and housing tenure (DK excluded). Source: BES Internet Panel Wave 13

Towards a Political Economy of Older Voters?

In much of the analysis of both the Brexit referendum and the 2017 general election, the votes of older people have been considered largely reactionary, as an expression either of socially conservative values pitted against the liberalism and cosmopolitanism of younger voters, or the perspective of people living in places in decline and ‘left behind’. Relatively little attention has been paid to whether older voters have distinct interests and political preferences by virtue of their position in the lifecycle and/or the material circumstances of the particular cohorts to which they belong. In this article, we have explored the material interests of older voters, showing – in line with ‘patrimonial’ or asset ownership economic choices – that home owners aged over 65, who make up over 75% of their age cohort, have strong and consistent preferences for voting Conservative. These older homeowners share socially conservative values with their peers that increase with age, but they are less committed to economic intervention and to defence of the Basic State Pension than those older voters in rented accommodation. Older voters are thus both united and divided across social class lines.

We have also shown that areas that are well integrated into the knowledge economy were more likely to vote Conservative in 2017 as the proportion of older voters in the local electorate increased. If there was a ‘tilting’ of the political axis in the Brexit referendum and its aftermath, this was more pronounced in younger areas: older areas were likely to vote Leave regardless of their sectoral composition. Thus, the combination of a preference for leaving the EU with voting Conservative in 2017 may indicate that a substantial number of older voters are relatively ‘insulated’ from the economic turbulence of Brexit by their material wealth and secure incomes, rather than simply registering ‘cultural’ choices on the one hand, or economic disadvantage, on the other. Meanwhile, social class differences between older homeowners and renters usefully help explain why older voters who voted Leave in 2016 did not all switch to voting Conservative in 2017 (and which may yet be visible in support for the Brexit Party in any future general election).

Evidence from the Bank of England, as well as research institutes such as the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Resolution Foundation, has found that older people have benefited disproportionately from both monetary and fiscal policy in the post-financial crisis era.²⁶ Older homeowners have seen their housing and pension wealth increase as a result of Quantitative Easing, while the austerity enacted by the Coalition and Conservative governments has given relative protection to the social security entitlements enjoyed by older people at the expense of those of the working age population. Thus, while the turbulence of recent political events has created many ‘supply side’ explanations for political change – and opened up considerable space in which challenger parties can operate – the ‘demand-side’ of voters’ preferences has focused too much on the cultural values of older voters and ‘left behind’ places, and not enough on the relative prosperity of the older population and the means by which they have secured their economic interests since the financial crisis. In an ageing society, in which rising numbers of people live for longer periods in retirement, political economic explanations of older people’s policy preferences need to pay more attention to their distinct interests, and how political parties respond to these.

¹ Lord Ashcroft, How did this result happen? My post-vote survey, 2017, accessed 17th May 2019 at <https://lordashcrofthpolls.com/2017/06/result-happen-post-vote-survey/>; C. Curtis, How Britain Voted at the 2017 General Election, YouGov, 2017, accessed on 17th May 2019 at <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2017/06/13/how-britain-voted-2017-general-election>; D. Phillips, J. Curtice, M. Phillips and J. Perry, J. (eds.) British Social Attitudes: The 35th Report, London: The National Centre for Social Research, 2018.

² T. Bell. and L. Gardiner, My Generation, Baby: The Politics of Age in Brexit Britain, in in G Kelly and N Pearce (eds) Britain Beyond Brexit, *The Political Quarterly*. Vol 90, Issue 2, 2019, pp 128 – 141; J. Tilley and G. Evans, The New Politics of Class after the 2017 General Election, *The Political Quarterly*, Vol 88, Issue 4, 2017, pp 710-15.

³ R. Inglehart and P. Norris, *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019; T. Iversen & D. Soskice, *Democracy and Prosperity*. Princeton University Press, 2019; W.Jennings & G. Stoker Tilting Towards the Cosmopolitan Axis? Political Change in England and the 2017 General Election. *Political Quarterly*, Vol 88, Issue 3, 2017, pp359-369; W. Jennings and G. Stoker, The Divergent Dynamics of Cities and Towns: Geographical Polarisation and Brexit. in G Kelly and N Pearce (eds) Britain Beyond Brexit, *The Political Quarterly*, Vol 90. Issue 2, 2019, pp 155-66.

⁴ UK residents over the age of 18 (except prisoners or members of the House of Lords) who are citizens of the Republic of Ireland, Malta and Cyprus can votes in UK Parliamentary elections, but not other EU citizens. The same eligibility rules that apply to UK Parliamentary elections were used for the Brexit referendum (with the addition of residents of Gibraltar) but not the referendum on Scottish independence, in which EU citizens and 16 and 17 year olds were entitled to vote. EU citizens can vote in local government and European Parliament elections.

⁵ J. Chrisp and N.Pearce, ‘*The Rise of the Grey Vote*’, Institute for Policy Research, 2019, accessed at 21st May 2019, <http://blogs.bath.ac.uk/iprblog/2019/05/21/the-rise-of-the-grey-vote/>

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